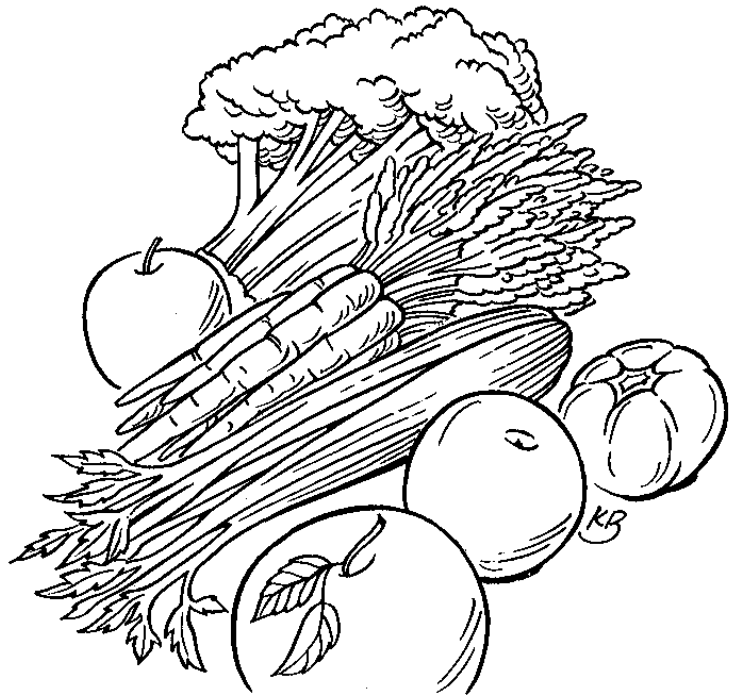


How Can I Avoid Weight Gain When I Stop Smoking?

Quitting smoking doesn't mean you'll automatically gain weight. And even if you do gain a couple pounds, that's not as important as saving your life...and the lives of others.

When people gain weight, it's usually because they start to eat more once they quit smoking. If you watch what you eat and stay physically active, you may not gain at all!



What should I eat?

- Plenty of fruits and vegetables (at least 5 servings a day).
- Whole-grain cereals, pastas and breads.
- Fat-free or low-fat snacks like pretzels.
- Sugar-free hard candy.
- Read food labels and choose healthful foods low in saturated fat and cholesterol.
- Cut back on alcohol and drinks with caffeine (coffee, tea and soft drinks).
- Drink lots and lots of water!

How can exercise help?

- Walking and other exercise releases stress and calms you.
- It can help control your appetite.
- It burns calories and can help you lose weight if you need to.
- It can help you stay at a normal weight.
- It can improve your mood.

What are good activities to help keep weight off?

Becoming more active can help you reduce or maintain your weight. Try any of the following. Check with your doctor first if you've been inactive a long time or have medical problems, you're middle-aged or older, and you plan a vigorous exercise program.

- Walk in your neighborhood or at indoor shopping malls.
- Do gardening or yard work.
- Take stairs instead of escalators and elevators.
- Park farther from stores and walk.
- Learn a new dance.
- Ride a bicycle.
- Try aerobic dance classes or use a videotape at home.

What can I do instead of smoking?

- Play with a pencil, paper clip or marbles.
- Munch on carrots, apples, celery and sugarless gum.
- Brush your teeth often and keep a fresh taste in your mouth.
- Keep your hands busy — wash the car, garden, knit, do crossword puzzles, write letters, cook.
- Try a new sport.
- Get plenty of rest and exercise.

What else can I do?

- Try relaxation techniques like deep breathing or meditation.
- Think positive thoughts! Feel proud about quitting.
- Write down why you're quitting and read it.
- Spend time with other nonsmokers.
- Go where there's no smoking, like stores, movies, churches and libraries.
- Reward yourself every day or week that you stay a nonsmoker. Don't use food as a reward.

How can I learn more?

- Talk to your doctor, nurse or health care professional. Or call your local American Heart Association at 1-800-242-8721, or the American Stroke Association at 1-888-478-7653.
- If you have heart disease or have had a stroke, members of your family also may be at higher risk. It's very important for them to make changes now to lower their risk.

Do you have questions or comments for your doctor?

- Take a few minutes to write your own questions for the next time you see your doctor. For example:

How do I read food labels?




South Carolina Department of Health
and Environmental Control

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